

Committee Attendance: Mark Berman, Jay Boyar, Kelly Cameron, Kernan Chaisson, Yen-Ju Chen, Nat Finkelstein, David Friedman, Suzanne Weiss, Noreene Wells and Ben Wu. Absent: Trish Evans, Gabriel Nmah and Grant Moy. Cable Office Staff: Amy Wilson, Andrea Gardner, and Keith Watkins. Guest/s: Alex Cohen, Melissa Pace, Dr. Costis Toregas and Richard Turner

1. Call to order/Approval of Agenda/Introduction of Attendees/Approval of Minutes

- Meeting began at 7pm with introductions, COB 6th Floor Conference Room. Amy introduced the new Council IT Advisor for telecommunications, Dr. Costis Toregas.
- Keith informed the group that Trish would not be attending the meeting due to the loss of her father. Suzanne suggested the committee send something in his memory and would contact Trish.
- Suzanne asked for a motion to approve the content of the June meeting minutes as presented, with the format to be determined. Suzanne requested a second motion to approve only the content of the previously approved April and May meeting minutes. Mark made both motions to approve the content of the minutes for all three months. Minutes approved unanimously.

2. Staff Reports, Budgets and Questions

Cable Office: *Amy Wilson, Acting Manager, Administration and Franchising Services*

- September Cable office report reviewed, see attached.
- Kernan asked Keith about the responses he received while at the County Fair regarding the DTV information which was distributed. Keith responded that people were generally aware of the transition.

PEG Network, *Melissa Pace, Manager Instructional Television, Montgomery College*

- Melissa thanked the committee for their continued support and provided the committee with an update on the college.

Richard Turner, Executive Director, Montgomery Community Television

- MCT is currently transitioning board members.

3. Unfinished Business and Committee Reports

- Suzanne addressed the issue of channel designation regarding the interactive guide and the fact that residents are unable to view this information on the web which puts county residents at a disadvantage. Comcast is the only provider who lists the channel on the cable guide. She discussed working with the providers and the PEGs to have a space on the site that the PEGs are responsible for, as she had discussed briefly with Al Carr of Verizon. Since we are working towards a

solution, it was decided to put a hold on sending a letter to the cable office regarding this issue. Melissa added that a good portion of the PEGs are interested in getting some response to this issue. Richard suggested that we take this one step at a time and wait for responses from both Comcast and Verizon. Richard plans to bring this topic up for discussion at the next PEG meeting.

- Richard noted that on the web there is a listing of the channel name and location. There is also a "What's on" program guide and MCT is not listed on the program guide on the Verizon web site, but is listed correctly with Comcast. Suzanne asked Richard to identify where exactly the channel listings are located for Comcast interactive guide. Richard and Melissa have agreed to handle this request. Kernan indicated he is now noticing the duplication of channels and the moving of channels into the high price brackets and these are some areas we may want to keep an eye on or address at a later date. Amy added there is not much the committee could do about this. Keith responded the only oversight the county has access to are the PEG channels.
- Suzanne noted there appears to be a new committee member and asked Keith to speak on the topic of the committee vacancies. Nat announced that he would be leaving the committee since he was assigned to a government taskforce. He has resigned from the MMC board. Keith responded there were a few terms expiring. Three terms are up and two committee members would be eligible for reappointment. The interview committee will be Jay, Suzanne and Kernan.
- Suzanne reviewed the 2009 meeting dates, and once again asked if we could consider returning to our previous date of the third Wednesday of each month, since this date conflicts with PG County. A motion was made to accept the dates with changes the proposed meeting dates for the months of November and December 2009 from 25th and 23rd to 18th and 9th respectively.
- David asked the committee to request the county to address concerns about bundles services and E911 by drafting a memo of concern to the Cable Office, and requesting they assist in bringing it to the County Council and Executive, the providers, and any additional regulatory powers. Discussion followed of concerns with service bundling and E911. David also spoke to the issue and concern for the FIOS VOIP battery back up, it should also be noted that providers may terminate all services if there is a dispute with one service or billing item. Nat added the difficulties with accessing customer service representatives. Amy asked Costis to help find what forums the committee could use to discuss these concerns.
RESPONSE: Costis suggested that Steve Emanuel has been charged with a strategic study this could be an opportunity to address this issue. Another suggestion would be to discuss this with the MFP and Public Safety Committee.
- Suzanne shared a letter from Comcast regarding limiting internet downloads, and a short and simple release about the transition to DTV in February 2009. "You do not need cable or satellite to receive DTV. All you need is a television with a digital tuner. You might see this called an ATSC tuner. By law, all television reception devices must have a digital tuner. Go to <http://www.dtv.gov> for all your

DTV questions. If you still have an analog television, you can either buy a DTV converter box (go to <http://www.dtv2009.gov> to get a \$40 coupon) or you can subscribe to cable or satellite as they both receive the digital signal to their box which can then convert the signal to your television. There may be a time when cable and satellite no longer do the analog conversions, but that is probably way off in the future." Richard and Melissa have agreed to forward this through the PEG message board.

- The Committee discussed concerns about verbiage and the question of simplifying ads. David suggested putting out public service announcements. Noreene brought up a few practical ideas, including asking if people knew anyone who may be affected by the transition. Richard and Melissa offered to assist by placing information on their respective bulletin boards in English, and Spanish.
- Suzanne again reminded the Committee to attend the 9:30 am MFP meeting schedule for Monday, October 20th 2008. Costis added that the MFP Committee is very interested in the topic of DTV and are looking to support and discuss this issue; Suzanne agreed. Suzanne again asked for the MFP committee to attend a committee meeting.

4. **New Business**

5. **Public Comments**

None presented.

6. **Adjourn** Meeting adjourned at 9pm Next committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, October 22 at 7pm in COB.

Submitted by: Andrea Gardner, Office Services Coordinator